

Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 195200 TOSEC 090010

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: BRIEFING MEMORANDUM: PORTUGUESE DEVELOPMENTS AS
OF 0900 EDT, 16 AUGUST 1975 S/S 7516542

1. LISBON IS BUZZING WITH RUMORS OF A PLANNED WEEKEND COUP ATTEMPT FOLLOWING YESTERDAY'S PUBLICATION OF AN EXPRESSO ARTICLE WHICH SAID THAT CODED MESSAGES WERE BEING TRANSMITTED ON AMATEUR RADIO BANDS. EMBASSY LISBON REPORTED BY TELEPHONE AT 0830 EDT TODAY THAT THERE ARE NO SIGNS OF ANY UNUSUAL MILITARY ACTIVITY ANYWHERE IN THE CAPITAL. WE PREVIOUSLY HAD SEVERAL CLANDESTINE REPORTS THAT GENERAL SPINOLA'S DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT FOR THE LIBERATION OF PORTUGAL (MDLP) PLANNED TO BEGIN ARMED ACTION IN PORTUGAL SOMETIME IN MID-AUGUST.

2. DESPITE THE AUGUST 15 HOLIDAY, THE TRIUMVIRATE HELD TWO MEETINGS YESTERDAY WITH SELECTED MINISTERS OF THE GONCALVES GOVERNMENT. THE FIRST MEETING WAS DEVOTED TO THE CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS. ACCORDING TO FBIS, GOVERNMENT SOURCES SAID THAT THE TRIUMVIRATE:

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--INFORMED THE MINISTERS THAT RECONCILIATION TALKS HAD BEEN

INITIATED WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES,

--MADE CLEAR ITS INTENTION TO TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO END THE POLITICAL VIOLENCE WHICH IS CURRENTLY SWEEPING THE COUNTRY, AND

--REPORTED THAT AN EFFORT IS UNDERWAY WITHIN THE AFM TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AND TO RESTORE "THE IN-DISPENSABLE UNITY OF THE ARMED FORCES AS GUARANTORS OF REVOLUTIONARY AUTHORITY."

THIS "PUBLIC RELATIONS" ANNOUNCEMENT IS NOT LIKELY TO CONVINCE ANYONE. ALL AVAILABLE EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT NO RECONCILIATION IS POSSIBLE WITH THE SOCIALISTS UNTIL GONCALVES IS REMOVED AS PRIME MINISTER, THAT THE MILITARY'S ABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO USE FORCE AGAINST ANTI-COMMUNIST DEMONSTRATORS IS AT LEAST QUESTIONABLE, AND THAT THE ARMED FORCES REMAIN DEEPLY DIVIDED.

THE SECOND MEETING, WHICH BEGAN IN LATE AFTERNOON, DEALT EXCLUSIVELY WITH ANGOLA. WE HAVE NO REPORTING ON THE OUTCOME OF THAT DISCUSSION.

3. AZORES. LEADERS OF THE AZOREAN LIBERATION FRONT (FLA) TOLD US LAST WEEK THAT A UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE COULD COME AS EARLY AS THIS WEEKEND. NEITHER OUR CONSUL AT PONTA DELGADA NOR THE LAJES BASE ON TERCEIRA ISLAND REPORT ANY UNUSUAL POLITICAL OR MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE ISLANDS THIS MORNING. SISCO

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